CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

SUB B

- 1. A method for controlling flooding in a bridged network having a bridge connected to a plurality of networks, said method comprising:
 - a) allowing broadcast flooding for a first limited time period to permit mapping of a MAC address to a port by the bridge; and
 - b) disallowing broadcast flooding for a second time period.
- 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said allowing and disallowing of broadcast flooding is carried out for each MAC address independently.

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- 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said bridge maintains a data structure to determine when to allow or disallow broadcast flooding.
- 4. The method of claim 3, wherein/said data structure is a filter table.

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- 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said filter table contains MAC address information with associated flooding time period.
- 6. In a bridge device having a plurality of ports, a filtering module comprising:
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- a) a flood control unit configured to allow broadcast flooding for a first limited time period, said flood control unit further configured to disallow broadcast flooding for a second time period; and

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- b) a data structure maintain by said flood control unit configured to maintain flood control data.
- 7. The filtering module of claim 6, wherein said data structure comprises a filter table containing MAC address information with associated flooding time period.
 - 8. In a bridge device having a plurality of ports, a filtering module comprising:
 - a) means for allowing broadcast flooding for a first limited time period;
 - b) means for disallowing broadcast flooding for a second time period; and
 - c) means for maintaining flood control data operatively coupled to said means for allowing broadcast flooding and said means for disallowing broadcast flooding.
- 9. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for controlling flooding in a bridged network having a bridge connected to a plurality of networks, said method comprising.
 - a) allowing broadcast flooding for a first limited time period to permit mapping of a MAC address to a port by the bridge; and
 - b) disallowing broadcast flooding for a second time period.
 - 10. The program storage device of plaim 9, wherein said allowing and disallowing of broadcast flooding is carried out for each MAC address independently.

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- 11. The program storage device of claim 9, wherein said bridge maintains a data structure to determine when to allow or disallow broadcast flooding.
- 12. The program storage device of claim 11, wherein said data structure is a filter table.
 - 13. The program storage device of claim 12, wherein said filter table contains MAC address information with associated flooding time period.